

East Whatcom Community Council Clean Air Committee

Meeting summary

April 12, 2017

CAC Charge: The charge of the East Whatcom Community Council Clean Air Committee is to work jointly with the Northwest Clean Air Agency to develop a comprehensive, community-based, long-range plan designed to improve the air quality in the East Whatcom County Region.

Chair: Phil Cloward, East Whatcom Community Council

Members: Jerry DeBruin & David Moe, WCFPD #14; John Wolpers, Whatcom County Health Department; Mark Schofield OppCo; Veronica Dearden, Kendall Watch Community Action Group; Kurt Thompson, community member; Viktor Vetkov, Slavic Church; Wain Harrison, Whatcom County; Julie O'Shaughnessy, NWCAA

Present: Phil Cloward, Jerry DeBruin, John Wolpers, Mark Schofield, Mark Sniffen, Julie O'Shaughnessy

Agenda items:

- 1. Introductions** – Introductions were not necessary. Only Clean Air Committee members were present.
- 2. Approval of March 8, 2017 meeting summary**
Motion:
 - Mark Schofield moved to approve meeting notes.
 - Phil Cloward seconded the motion.
- 3. Open public comment** – No public comment.
- 4. Announcements**

May meeting

Julie

Seth Preston, NWCAA Communications Manager, will represent NWCAA at our May meeting in her absence.

Community Connections meeting update

Julie - Shared that at the Community Connections meeting today, citizens were curious if the fallen trees on the roadways could be harvested and if so, under what conditions. Community members also asked if the County would "stage" the trees in a central spot for easier and safer harvesting or coordinate effort in some way. Responded to Community Connections that she didn't have an answers, but that she would bring it to the CAC meeting today for discussion.

Phil – Said that many entities have jurisdiction over the downed trees and harvesting issues and access are determined by the location of the wood. Suggested establishing contact with Whatcom County Public Works to pass along the community's questions voiced at the "Connections" meeting.

Jerry – Observed a citizen harvesting wood for two days where Kendall Road turns into Reese Hill Road. He used safety cones to cordon-off his work area.

All – The most important thing is to help spread the work that the newly downed trees are not ready to properly seasoned and would only create safety and air quality issues if burned now.

Mark – Added that LIHEAP eligible residents who have less than a 10-day supply of wood are eligible for crisis assistance appointments to help residents bridge heating seasons.

Julie – Suggested sharing the availability of LIHEAP crisis assistance at the next Community Connections meeting.

Phil & John – Suggested contacting Joe Rutan at Whatcom County Public Works, to pass along the wood salvaging questions raised by local residents.

Julie – Will make the follow-up call to Rutan.

Julie – Several other issues brought up at the Community Connections meeting were questions about proper heat-pump sizing and the quality of pressed-logs, both acquired through either the change-out program or the energy assistance program. These comments along with previous comments about proper woodstove-sizing discussed at our last meeting make indicate that further discussions, fact-finding, and research is necessary.

Mark & Julie – Will schedule a follow-up meeting with Opportunity Council staff and program vendor(s) to further fact find, clearly define expectations, better understand how programs are coordinated (weatherization and change-outs), and make changes if and where necessary.

Welcome Mark Sniffen, new committee member

Mark Sniffen – Whatcom County's new Fire Marshal, introduced himself to the committee and provided a brief history of his background and area of expertise (electrical for 16 years).

Mark, Phil, Jerry, John, Julie - The committee provided Mark Sniffen with a brief background of themselves and the stakeholder group they represent. They also welcomed Mark to the group and stated that they look forward to working with him.

Wood-heating season monitoring data

Julie – Proudly announced that this wood-heating season (October 1-March 31) had ZERO days that were in the "unhealthy" range, even with the harsh, long winter we experienced!!

5. Residential wood sheds; construction & delivery update

Phil – Provided Sniffen with an overview of the wood shed program prior to providing a program update to the committee.

Five sheds were recently delivered leaving approximately 15 sheds to complete the project.

6. Biomass committee update

Phil – Said that continued progress is underway. The wood bank area has been identified as has a spot to temporarily store the wood. We also met with the Lehigh Cement, owner of the 40 light-industrial acres, and they view the project favorably. The next step will be to meet with the Port of Bellingham and the Woodland Coop and Biomass Committee of the East Whatcom Community Council to confirm a wood-storage area and production plant that would be in the form of pellets, bricks, wood chips, and possibly a cogen plant. Another component of the project is looking at converting some of the current propane heating systems to biomass.

A major benefit will be the estimated ten, living-wage jobs resulting from this project.

7. Outreach ideas

Phil – For the anticipated fall community meeting, it would be beneficial to bring in an old, uncertified stove as a visual aid to help point out failed components of a wood stove.

All – Committee members will strategize and report back how they might help or participate in the fall meeting/workshop.

Jerry – Suggested the possibility of piggy-backing our event with the community meals event in September.

Phil – Will consult with Jessica on this possibility.

Julie – Will follow-up after receiving feedback from Phil.

8. NWCAA's draft outreach strategy for 2017-2018

Julie – Presented a draft outline of NWCAA's outreach ideas and timelines and asked the committee for feedback on proposed or missing ideas.

Timeline	Outreach topic
Spring 2017	Start gathering and seasoning your wood now for next heating season <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get message posted to FD reader board• Post to fire department, NWCAA and KendallWatch websites
Sept 2017	Community workshop/presentation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• demonstrate the subtle nuances of wood burning• demonstrate maintenance of wood burning equipment• remind community that air quality burn bans will be called and that enforcement will occur
Sept 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NWCAA to send letter to residents who received a heavy smoke warning this year, reminding them that we will be back out and that resources are still available.• Include DVD on how to burn cleanly and how to choose a wood stove with the letter. Also, include website link in case people don't have DVD players.
Sept 2017	NWCAA to partner with Opportunity Council to get wood-burning exemption forms filled out during the LIHEAP intake process and get the forms returned to NWCAA as soon as possible

The date of the workshop will be confirmed at a later date.